

Allendale Coal Processing Plant
South of PA 869, 1.5 miles West of Beaverdale
Beaverdale Vicinity
Cambria County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-181

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: South of PA 869, 1.5 miles West of Beaverdale, Beaverdale Vicinity,
Cambria County, Pennsylvania

USGS Quad: Beaverdale, Pennsylvania (1:24000)
UTM: 17 E.693555 N.4465360

Date of Construction: ca. 1950

Builder: Johnstown Coal & Coke Corporation
Roberts & Schaffer, Chicago, Illinois, architects

Present Owner: unknown

Present Use: Abandoned

Significance: The construction of the Tipple and Separator at Allendale was an attempt by the Johnstown Coal & Coke Corporation to remain competitive in the coal markets. All of the coal which this company produced in the 1950s was cleaned at the Allendale facility.

Project Information: In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Blair and Cambria counties as the first step in identifying the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

The results of this project have been published in Blair County and Cambria County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1990), edited by Gray Fitzsimons and produced by HABS/HAER for the National Park Service.

Compiler: Nancy Shedd and Ken Heineman, Historians
Gray Fitzsimons and Kenneth Rose, Editors

History:

In 1912 Harry A. Crichton, an engineering graduate of Lehigh University, and his brother Andrew, organized the Johnstown Coal & Coke Company, purchasing coal properties in southern Cambria and northern Somerset counties. For the next several years the company leased properties to a number of coal operators, of which the Beachley Coal Company was one of the largest. In 1916 under a lease arrangement with Beachley Coal, a colliery was opened on Martin Branch near Portage. The following year Johnstown Coal & Coke established a sales company in New York City, and began acquiring additional coal properties in West Virginia and Maryland.¹

By the 1940s the company had acquired the Logan Coal Company, which had extensive properties at Beaverdale, and was mining coal and producing coke under its own name. Johnstown Coal & Coke continued to expand in southern Cambria County, purchasing the Beaver Run Mine from the Cortright Company in 1951. As the market for coal and coke waned in the late 1950s, Johnstown Coal & Coke shed its Pennsylvania operations. By 1959 the company had pulled out of Portage and Beaverdale, producing metallurgical and steam coal exclusively at its West Virginia mines.²

In 1940 the Johnstown Coal & Coke Company purchased the coal properties of the Logan Coal Company, of Philadelphia. The most significant of these mines were located in Adams and Summer Hill townships. The Johnstown Coal & Coke constructed this tippie and preparation plant at Allendale in the early 1950s; it replaced an earlier tippie and processing plant erected by the Logan Coal Company. The four-story, steel-frame plant dry-cleaned and sorted coal, and Pangborn dust collectors helped remove some of the coal dust that filled the air during the cleaning and sorting process. Virtually all of the conveyors and equipment remain in place.

The construction of the Allendale preparation plant and tippie marked one of the last efforts by Johnstown Coal & Coke to make its Pennsylvania mines competitive in the metallurgical coal markets. All of the coal from the Johnstown Coal & Coke mines in Cambria County in the 1950s was cleaned at the Allendale plant. In 1959 the company decided to close all of its operations in Pennsylvania, and the Allendale plant was closed down. A number of other mining concerns leased the property from Johnstown Coal & Coke, however, the tippie and cleaning plant have been abandoned for several years.

Sources:

Hunt, J.W. "Crichton No. 4: A Modern Mine," Mechanization (February 1960): 67-70.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Report of the Department of Mines of Pennsylvania: Part II - Bituminous.

Harrisburg: 1918-1918.

Crichton, Jack. Former Executive Vice President, Johnstown Coal & Coke Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania.
Interview, 24 July 1987.

¹ J.W. Hunt, Crichton No. 4, "Mechanization," (February 1960), pp. 67-70.

² Hunt, pp. 67-70; Jack Crichton, former Executive Vice President, Johnstown Coal and Coke Company, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Personal Interview, 24 July 1987.